

# Spirit of Bosnia / Duh Bosne

An International, Interdisciplinary, Bilingual, Online Journal  
Me?unarodni, interdisciplinarni, dvojezi?ni, online ?asopis

## A Decree Arrived from Istanbul

Ballad

A decree arrived from Istanbul,  
An order from Travnik,  
Right to the city of Sarajevo,  
Delivered into the hands of Dizdar-aga:  
To capture the two Mori? brothers,  
The two Mori? brothers, the two young  
men,  
Ibro Mori? and Pašo Mori?;  
To capture them, to bind them,  
To bind them, and to condemn them to  
death.  
And furthermore the sultan was angered  
by them,  
Hearing complaints from Travnik,  
From the vezir in Travnik:  
that the Mori? brothers were outlaws,  
That they accepted the rule of neither the  
sultan,  
Neither the sultan, nor the vezir,  
Nor of any lord,  
But only of themselves as lords,  
And that they acted like lords, and did  
as they pleased.  
When Dizdar-aga saw,  
What the order informed him,  
He called for his soldiers,  
To capture the two Mori? brothers,  
To capture them, to bind them,  
To bind them, to lead them  
Straight to the city, to the prison,  
Where Dizdar quickly made plans:  
Who entered the prison would not  
emerge alive!  
The two Mori? brothers were captured,  
They were captured and bound,

They were bound and led,  
 Just when their mother was making  
 pita. <sup>1</sup>  
 In one hand was a rolling pin,  
 And in the other a gold jug.  
 News came to their aged mother  
 That the Mori? brothers had been  
 captured,  
 And had been led to the prison.  
 When their aged mother heard this,  
 The poor woman threw everything  
 Into the courtyard, on the cobblestones:  
 She broke the rolling pin,  
 Dented the gold jug,  
 Then she rushed out of the courtyard,  
 Barefoot, with uncovered head,  
 She shrieked and pulled out her hair,  
 All of Hat-Square burst into tears. <sup>2</sup>  
 Here she reached Sara?i St. <sup>3</sup>: 3

Shame on you, all of you  
 leatherworkers,  
 That you gave the two Mori? brothers  
 up,  
 Why did you not save one of them,  
 Or somehow plead for his life?  
 Who will console me?  
 Who will look after an old woman?!

She hissed like a snake,  
 And the leatherworkers burst into tears.  
 From there she went up Kova?i, <sup>4</sup>  
 She twisted her hands, and spoke:

Shame on you, all you ironworkers,  
 That you gave the two Mori? brothers  
 up,  
 Why did you not save one of them,  
 Or somehow plead for his life?  
 Who will console me?  
 Who will look after an old woman?  
 Woe is me, a poor mother!

Then the aged mother rushed again

Straight up the hill above Kova?i,  
 Until she reached Dizdar-aga,  
 Who was leading both her sons,  
 Both of her sons, who were bound  
 With thick chains.  
 Alone the poor mother approached  
 them,  
 Alone she approached them, and fell  
 before them,  
 She fell before them, and began to  
 plead.  
 Eloquently pleaded the aged mother:

Brother-in-God, Dizdar-aga,  
 Release one of my sons to me,  
 Release to me either Ibro,  
 Either Ibro, or Pašo!  
 Ask for something, for whatever  
 you want!  
 Either a feudal village, or slaves?  
 Or do you prefer pure gold?  
 Only give me one of my sons!  
 If you don't release one of them,  
 By my faith, I curse you,  
 And by the fast of Ramadan,  
 I will swear by the sky, and by the  
 earth,  
 I will pray a mighty prayer.  
 There will never be peace  
 For either the sultan or the vezir,  
 While they rule over Bosnia,  
 Nor will things be good for you!

When Dizdar-aga heard this,  
 He said to the aged mother,

I will release both sons to you,  
 Both sons, and without any  
 payment.

The aged mother was deceived,  
 She was deceived, and returned  
 home.  
 The fetters and chains rang,  
 The two Mori? brothers were led

out.

When they reached Jekovac,<sup>5</sup>  
Ibro Mori? spoke:

By God, Dizdar-aga,  
Stop the guards,  
Free my white hands,  
And give me a little tambura,  
So that I can look out over  
Sarajevo,  
So that I can ease my mind!

When Dizdar-aga heard this,  
He stopped the guards,  
The nearby guards,  
Freed his white hands,  
Gave him a little tambura.  
Just see Ibro Mori?!  
When he took hold of the little  
tambura,  
He stretched the fine strings,  
Then he began to pluck and to  
sing.  
Ibro Mori? finely plucked,  
He finely plucked, and loudly  
sang:

O world, you are wide!  
Sarajevo, you are beautiful to  
look at!  
Baš?aršija, you are wealthy!<sup>6</sup>  
?emaluša, you are long!<sup>7</sup>  
Latinluk, you are flat!<sup>8</sup>  
Tališhan, you are wide!<sup>9</sup>  
Beautiful Mara, you are  
beautiful!  
Many times you brought me  
drink,  
And sheltered me from my  
enemies.  
My hour has come, and I must  
die!

Ibro was again bound,  
He was bound and they were  
led,  
Ibro Mori? and Pašo Mori?,  
And they were led into the city,  
And imprisoned in the jail.  
When it was dusk,  
Dizdar-aga said:

Lead out the two Mori?  
brothers,  
And bring a silken cord!

The two Mori? brothers were  
led out,  
A silken cord was brought,  
Pašo Mori? was strangled.  
Ibro Mori? watched all of this.  
Dizdar-aga spoke:

By God, Ibro Mori?,  
Are you sad for your brother?

Ibro Mori? spoke:

Yes, I'm sad for my brother,  
And even sadder for our aged  
mother!

The two Mori? brothers were  
strangled,  
Their bodies were thrown in  
front of the gate,  
And two cannons were fired.  
When their aged mother heard  
this,  
Their aged mother rushed out;  
When she reached the gate,  
There lay both sons,  
Both sons, strangled:  
On their legs were fetters,  
On their arms were handcuffs,  
Around their necks, a silken  
cord.

When their aged mother saw  
this –  
Her heart burst from grief.

(Maglajli?, br. 2/1995: 151-156)

Maglajli?, Munib. *Usmena balada bošnjaka*. Sarajevo: Preporod, 1995, pp. 151-156.

Translated by Masha Belyavski-Frank

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#### Notes

1. Pita is one of several types of filled pastry, and one of the most common dishes of Bosnia. Savory pita is eaten for breakfast, for snacks, or for any meal of the day. Pita can be savory (filled with any one of a number of fillings, such as ground meat, cheese, spinach and cheese, or potatoes) or sweet (filled with cherries, apples, etc.). In the latter case, it is eaten as dessert. ?
2. Hat-mejdan ('Horse-Square') is by the Miljacka River, near the center of Sarajevo. ?
3. Sara?i St. ('Leatherworkers St.') is one of the streets in the Baš?aršija, the main marketplace. ?
4. Kova?i is the area in Sarajevo above the Baš?aršija, below the Vratnik neighborhood. ?
5. Jekovac is the area in Sarajevo above Kova?i, on the road to the fortress. ?
6. Baš?aršija is the main marketplace in Sarajevo, with a number of streets, each devoted to a different craft. ?
7. ?emaluša is a street in the center of Sarajevo, where wealthy families lived. ?
8. Latinluk, along the Miljacka River, is the area of town where Catholics from Dubrovnik lived. ?
9. Tašlihan was the largest inn in the city of Sarajevo, made of stone, and located in the center of town. ?

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